

FreePointTM
Technologies Inc.

Steel Service Centers

Application Notes

by FreePoint Technologies Inc.



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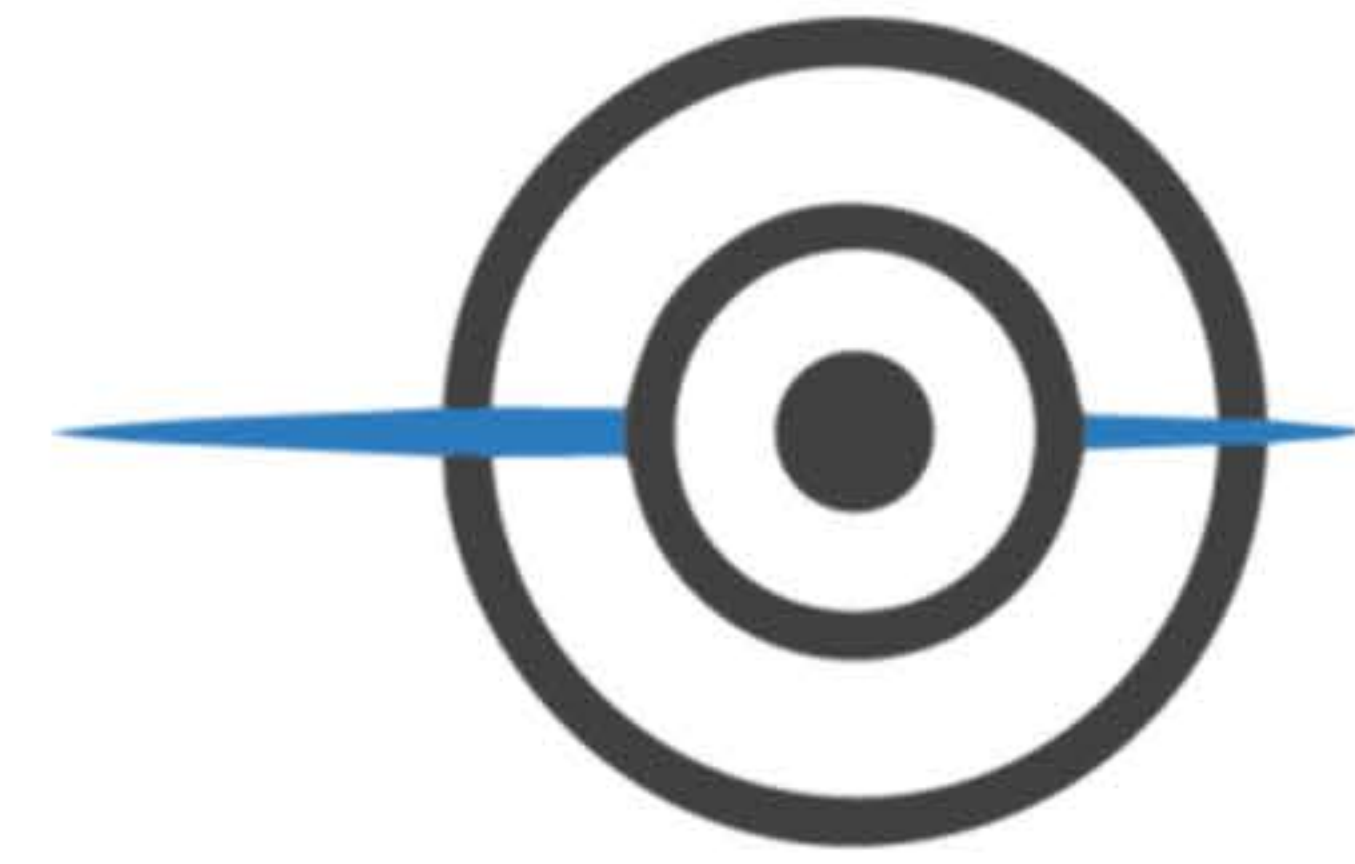
About Steel Service Centers

INDUSTRY OVERVIEW

Steel service centers look to better understand their machine utilization time and downtime. Distributing anything from plate steel, pipe, tube, or block steel, these service centers aim to turn around cut-to-size orders as quickly as possible.

Types of machines typically monitored:

- Plasma Cutters
- Laser Cutters
- Oxy Acetylene Tables
- Machining centers
- Band saws
- Cold saws



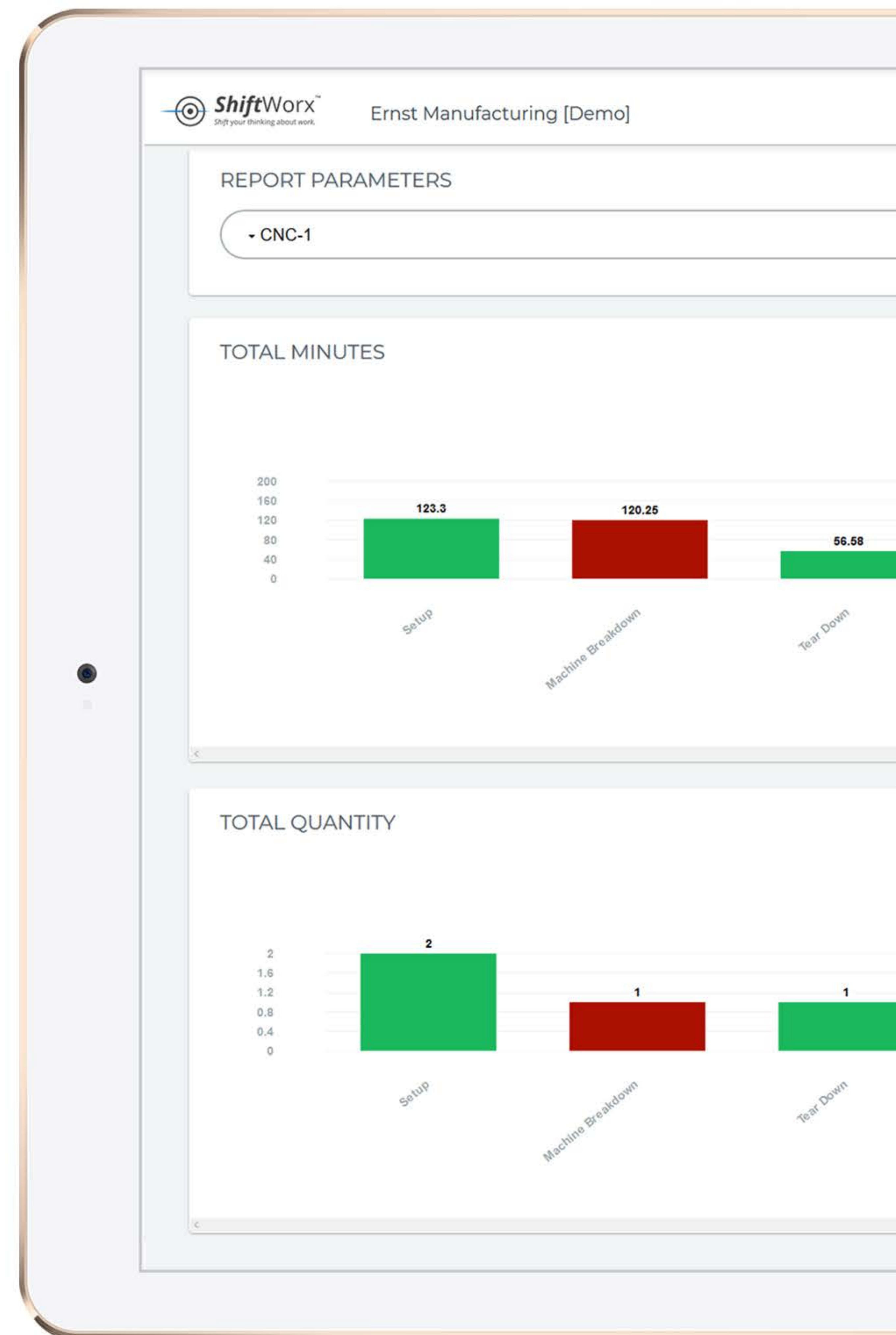
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The Challenge

Often, each part of an order in this industry is for a specific size or unique shape and of a particular type of metal. The service centers competitive advantage is their inventory of material (metal types and sizes) and their ability to cut to suit customers' requirements quickly. Orders are frequently for multiple different parts that have to be delivered at the same time.

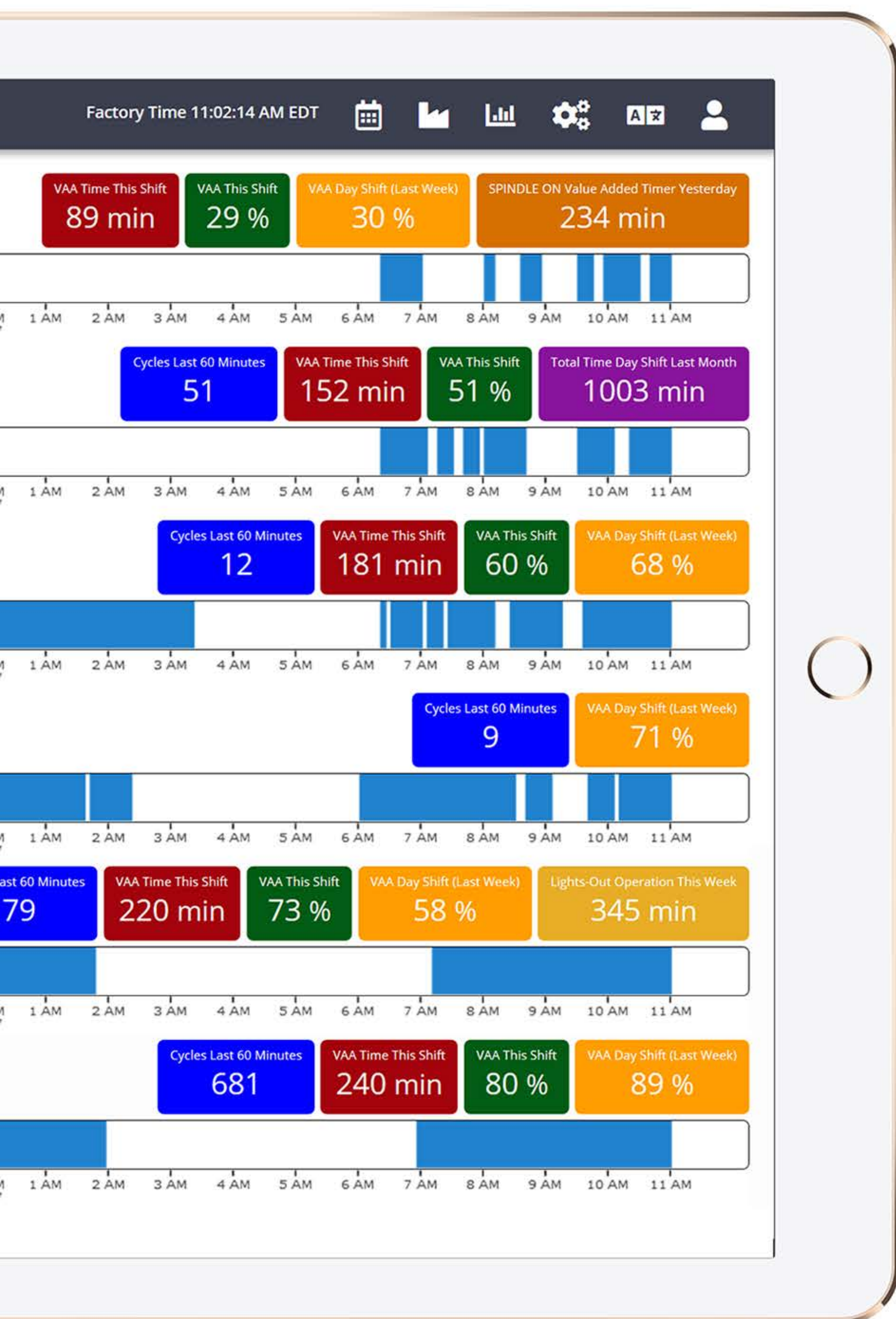
To meet these demanding objectives, service centers often have a wide variety of machines, including X-Y cutting tables of various types, small and large cut off saws, cold saws, and even machining centers. Optimizing the use of these machines directly affects how long it can take to process orders and get them out the door quickly.



Knowing the causes of downtime will help management determine which machines are needed to remain competitive, which should be upgraded, and which should be replaced.



The Solution



FreePoint connects non-invasively to every machine on the shop floor, without modification to the machine, its controller, or the company's IT infrastructure. FreePoint's ShiftWorx software tracks the machine's uptime and makes it very easy to track machine downtime. The increased transparency often results in an increase in productivity right away.

Engaging the operators through a very simple, intuitive "Narration" tool, does two things: it collects empirical downtime information that facilitates "data driven decisions" on future investments, and it engages the operators and makes them part of the solution, not the problem.

Positive operator engagement is proven to pay short term dividends by increasing productivity, and long term dividends through less absenteeism, higher retention, as well as reduced onboarding and training costs.



Narrative

Using our "Narrative" module, Operators are engaged in the data collection process by empirically identifying all the non-value adding periods (down time causes), giving management the information they need to make better decisions.



Notifications

Using our "Notifications" module, supervisors, managers and maintenance staff can be alerted via text or email whenever a critical machine has stopped for a defined period of time, minimizing or eliminating unnecessary down time.

The Outcome

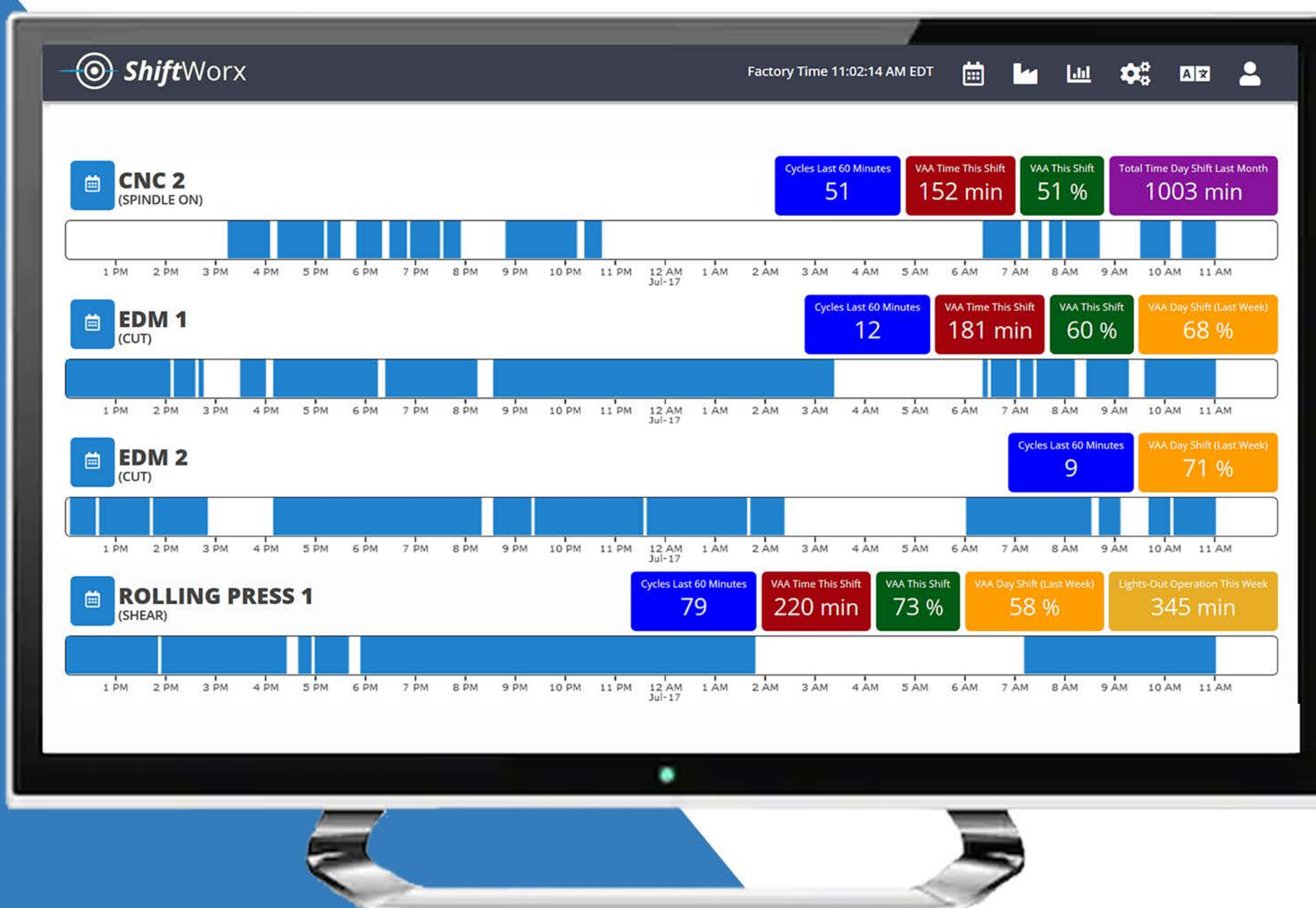
With the empirical data collected, management can provide more accurate job estimates on both time and cost, improving their competitive advantage.

By Leveraging the real time machine utilization and production information at their fingertips, management can also increase overall production capacity without hiring new staff or purchasing additional machines. Armed with this information, steel service centers can further refine their process and can consider adding custom scheduling and automated quoting software, to be even more responsive and competitive.

- Improve Process Transparency
- Increase Accuracy of Estimates
- Visualize & Mitigate Downtime
- Identify Constraints
- Increase Capacity

KPI's & Measurements:

- **Feed Rate**
(if it is a tube or pipe mill) in feet or meters per minute
- **Cutting Time**
What % of time the mill/saw/cutter has been running by hour/day/shift
- **Set Up time**
What is the average set up time by machine, or job type
- **Machine Utilization**
Which machines have capacity and which machines are constraints
- **Downtime**
What are the reasons for non-productive time

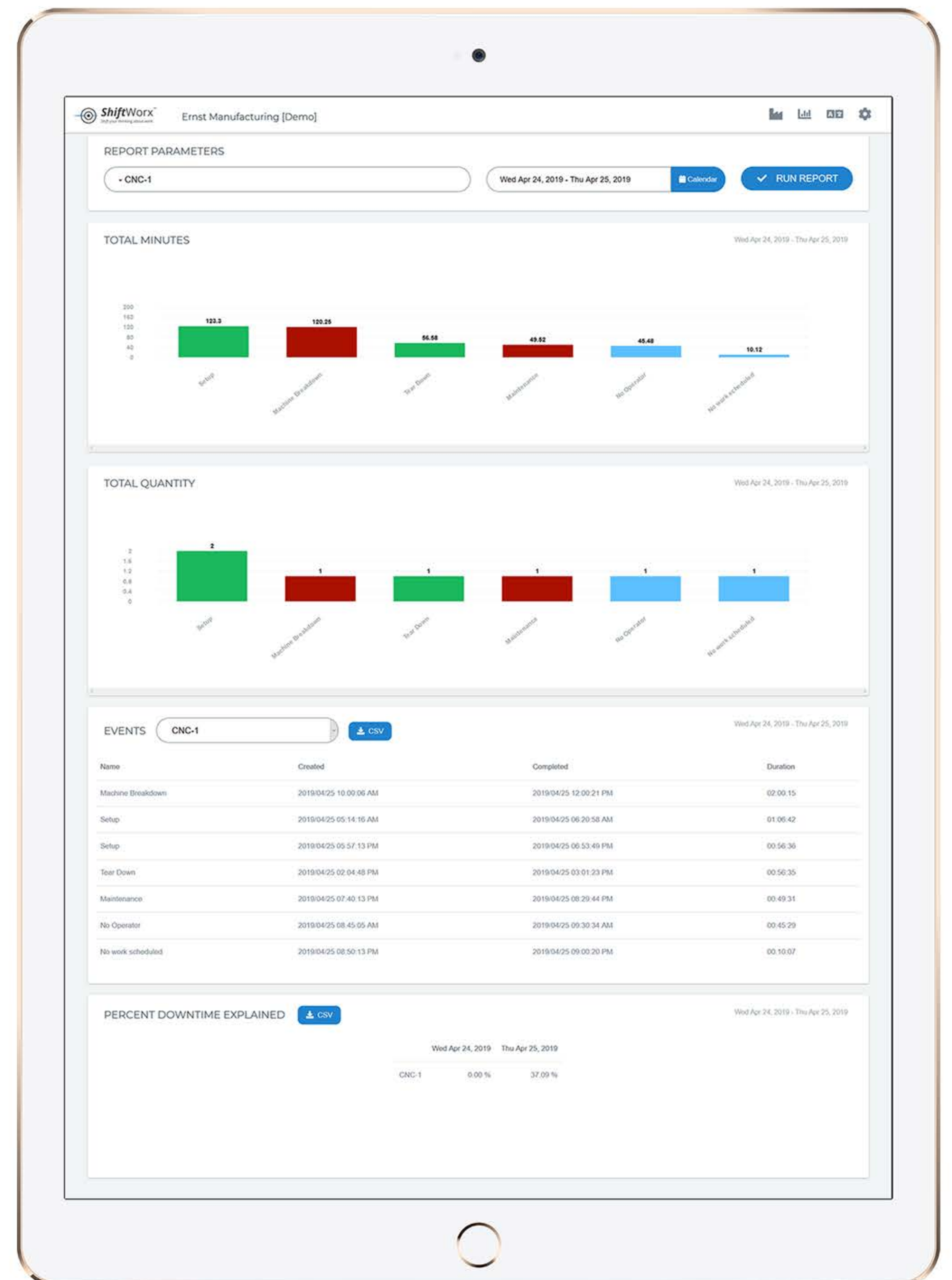


Our Narrative Application

Engaging the operators through our very simple, intuitive Narration tool, does two things:

1. Collects empirical downtime information that facilitates *data driven decisions* on future investments.
2. Engages the operators and makes them part of the solution, not the problem.

Positive operator engagement has proven to pay short term dividends with increased daily productivity, and long term dividends through higher satisfaction that results in less absenteeism and higher retention.



When somebody can see others are being delayed as a result of their problem, that person is much more likely to resolve the issue at a faster pace.

Interested in an IIoT Solution?

Reach out to us today to speak with an Account Manager.

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